1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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CLOTHING

291 MEN.—The loin cloth, breechcloth, or waistcloth (M.: *palpura;*[17] T., P.: *wah;* U.: *ani*) was formerly the only article of dress worn by men on ordinary occasions. It consists of a long, narrow strip of bark cloth, 8 to 9 feet long and 12 to 15 inches wide, which is wrapped several times around the loins, while the ends are left to hang down in front and behind. Occasionally it was made from cotton, and ornamented with colored patterns. The loin cloth has now practically disappeared among the Miskito, being worn only by boys, but it is still in use among the grown-up Sumu. Now all the men from both tribes own loose cotton shirts (M.: *prak;* S.: *parak;* from the English "frock") and trousers (M.: *trâusis*, from the English; T., P.: *kal-anin;* U.: *kalson*, from the Spanish "calzón") with the tails generally not tucked in. They make these articles themselves from imported cloth or they obtain the finished garment by way of trade. Formerly the Sumu used a sort of shirt or poncho, consisting merely of a sheet of tree bark with a hole in the middle for the head; it was tied under each arm with a piece of fiber. This primitive garment was called *kahlâu* or *kahlo* by the Sumu; its Miskito name is unknown. When the Indian is in the open at the approach of rain he pulls his shirt off and covers it up with large *Heliconia* or *Musa* leaves in order to prevent it from getting wet.

[177] [439] [287]

WOMEN.—The only garment worn by the more primitive women of both tribes is a wrapper (M.: *kwaluntara;* T.: *ipnapan;* P.: *ipnapani, asna-pani, amat-pani;* U.: *asna-pahka*), a piece of cloth, 2½ to 3 yards in length, which is wrapped about the hips and extends from the waist, where it is fastened by tucking in one end, down to the knees. Nowadays it is made of imported bright-colored cloth, but formerly the common tunu bark cloth was used for this purpose. The upper part of the body was entirely naked in former days, but now the women wear a sleeveless garment of imported cotton goods, which is cut very open and is known by the English name *prak* (= "frock") among the Miskito; the Sumu call it *kahlâu* (T., P.) or *kahlo* (U.). Little girls wear a sort of loin cloth, as do the boys, but with broad end pieces which look like small aprons in front and behind; this garment is called *nika* by the Miskito and *tatâi* by the Sumu.

[439] [287]

292 DRESS OF THE CHIEFS.—Men of rank wore, besides the loin cloth, a sleeveless cotton tunic (M.: *wipal;*[18] S.: *kiñkura*) which hung down to the knees; it was beautifully embroidered with the down of the muscovy duck and dyed by means of vegetable juices. A girdle, sash or belt (M.: *yalasawa;* S.: *bamak-sitna*) of the same material was tied around the waist over this sort of mantle; it was about 6 feet long and 6 inches wide.

[531]

[17] This name is mentioned in 1699 under the form *purprey* (M. W.: 307, 308).
[18] Compare the word "huipil" in Mexican-Spanish.

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301 ments. The Sumu also carried the nails and teeth extracted from their unhappy victims (M. W.: 305). The seeds of the "lágrima [824] de San Pedro" (*Coix lacryma-jobi* L.; M.: *twi ma;* S.: *am minik, am mak*) are still in great favor.

In modern times such necklaces are nearly always made from small colored glass beads (M.: *lilyura;* T., P.: *ala;* U.: *tasaška*) of foreign manufacture. Bead ornaments are also worn by both sexes around the wrist, at the ankle, and below the knee. On festive occasions the men also put "hatbands" of beadwork around their hats. The Sumu women seldom wear the beads worked in a pretty design, as do the men, but they put the whole "hank" around the neck, just as they buy them in the shops, fastening the ends at the back of the neck. Sometimes they wear such a large quantity of these beads as to hinder them considerably in following their daily occupation.

301 FEATHERWORK.—Feathers from certain bright-colored birds, as parrots, toucans, macaws, curassows, etc., are made into ornaments ●287 by attaching them to a string or to a thin vine with the aid of thread from cotton or silk grass fiber. Such ornaments are comparatively rare now; they are seen chiefly at the festival of the dead. The art 232 of the "tapirage" (from a native name of the Guianas), or artificial means of obtaining yellow or red plumes from parrots or other birds, as is still done in South America, appears to have been known to the Sumu in former days. For this purpose they used the secretion from [825] the skin of a common greenish-blue frog (*Dendrobates tinctorius*) with black stripes and spots over the whole body, including the legs, which was rubbed into the skin of the parrot, the subsequently appearing young feathers being yellowish red instead of green.

301 PECTORAL PLATES.—M. W. (308) mentions a thin breastplate worn by the Miskito on festal occasions; it was made of a Spanish dollar piece beaten out flat. Columbus also mentions such gold ornaments which were worn around 1502 on the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica and Panama.

301 NOSE AND LIP ORNAMENTS.—The nasal septum was formerly per- 304 forated for the reception of a rod of bone or cane, an ornament which has now entirely disappeared. Dampier (I, 32) describes and depicts a curious cone or bell shaped ornament of turtle shell worn by the Kukra males of Corn Islands in the underlip. During early childhood the lip of the boy was pierced and the perforation kept open by means of little pegs. When arrived at the age of 14 or 15 (probably at the age of puberty) the boy inserted in the opening an ornament of tortoise shell, the under part of which was allowed to hang down over the chin; it was worn the whole day long, but it was taken out at night. About the latter part of the seventeenth century the Miskito wore on the chin a pendent plate of brass or shell, which was supported by a turtle-shell hook inserted in the lower lip (M. W.: 308).

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(Spanish "torta" or "plancha"). The milk, adhering to the cuts made into the bark, blackened upon exposure to the sun and air; it was left to coagulate there, and then wrapped up in bundles separate from the other rubber. This was shipped mostly to New York, where it was known as "scrap rubber" or "picket rubber" (Spanish "burucha," the "sernamby" of the Brazilians). In later years the spot at the foot of the rubber tree was cleared and the milky juice was allowed to drop to the ground, taking its own time to coagulate. After a couple of weeks, when it was sufficiently dry, it was rolled up and made into bundles varying from 50 to 200 pounds in weight. This is the "strip rubber" of commerce (Spanish "tira" or "cuera").

When this industry started in 1860 large rubber trees from 4 to 5 feet in diameter were not uncommon. These yielded, when first cut, about 20 gallons of milk, each gallon of which furnished 2 pounds of rubber. After an ordinary bleeding the tree soon recuperates, and may be tapped again the following year. Unscrupulous collectors merely felled the tree in order to facilitate the work. By this pernicious method large trees have been made to yield over a quintal of rubber, but gradually all the big trees were killed and even specimens measuring 3 feet in diameter became rare. Many huleros then adulterated the rubber with the latex derived from the tunu tree; the resulting mixture being less elastic, and consequently of inferior quality, the product from the Mosquito Coast yielded a lower price than that from other regions of Central America.

Previous to 1860 rubber was collected in thick circular cakes, which were used only to make black paint from the melted gum.

MANUFACTURE OF BARK CLOTH

In the northern part of the Mosquito Coast a coarse brownish cloth is pounded from the inner bark of a tree closely related to the rubber tree (*Castilla* sp.). The cloth, as the tree itself, is known throughout the country by the Miskito name *tasa*,[34] while the Twahka and Panamaka call the tree *tikan*, and the finished product *amat*.[35] The tree does not grow in the region inhabited by the Ulwa, and these Indians use the bark of the rubber tree (*tas*) for the manufacture of bark cloth, which they call *tas-bilana* "pounded rubber."

USES OF BARK CLOTH.—Nowadays bark cloth is made almost exclusively into "sheets" or "blankets" for the bed, and into loin cloths (M.: *palpura*; T., P.: *wuk-uto*; U.: *ase*). In former days it furnished the clothing for rich and poor, although the gala dress, of men of rank at least, appears to have been of cotton.

[34] This name is already found by M. W. (307, 308) in the form *tasa*.

[35] *Amatl* or *guacimamatl* is the Mexican name for a species of fig, the bark of which was made into paper and clothing.

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• 287 PREPARATION OF TUNU CLOTH.—The tunu tree is cut down and deprived of its bark; the latter is then soaked in water for a few days, after which the sticky gum or milk adhering to it is scraped off. The bark is then dried in the sun and kept in the hut until the women find time to pound it into cloth. In this state it is called *kusni* by the Miskito, Twahka, and Panamaka, and *kuska* by the Ulwa. As it becomes hard and shrinks considerably, it has to be submerged in the neighboring stream for a short time before the pounding of it begins. The latter operation is performed on a small log[33] (M.: *tun-dusa;* S.: *lañlañ*) with the aid of a wooden mallet having the shape of a short thick club, into which longitudinal ridges have been made at the head part. This mallet is known by the names *kahka* and *para*, after the two small species of palm, from the stem of which it is made.[34] The Miskito living around Brus Lagoon and on the lower Rio Patuca also make use of the stem of a small fan-leafed palm which grows in that region and is known to Indians and foreigners by the name "palmetto." The bark extends gradually upon being pounded, and it becomes soft and flexible. After being washed and dried, it is ready for use, and has a brownish color. In Oceania the same process is employed and a similarly shaped mallet is used to manufacture the bark cloth, known by the name "tapa," but the tree of those regions is a species of Morus.

WHITE BARK CLOTH.—A similar cloth, but almost white in color and of superior quality, is obtained by the same process from the inner bark of a species of Ficus (S.: *yakuta, yakanta*) and likewise from the rubber tree (*Castilla* sp.). But in both cases the manufacture of the cloth is more laborious. The cloth from these two trees is known locally as "white tunu" (M.: *tunu pihni;* S.: *yakanta, tas-banna*); it [754] is used by the sorcerer in connection with incantations. For this purpose the sukya marks it with designs in black and red obtained with the aid of clay, charcoal, or vegetable juices.

Raveneau de Lussan (439) mentions the manufacture by the Miskito of clothing and covers from the "bastard palm"; the present writer ignores what kind of tree is meant thereby, as no part of any palm is utilized nowadays for such a purpose.

CERAMICS

323 Pottery making is rapidly becoming a lost art among the Sumu, owing to the introduction of iron and cheap tinware, while it is entirely unknown to the Miskito of the present day. The Sumu from Rio Bocay have attained some skill in making earthenware of different

[33] According to Exquemelin (Engl. edit.: 251) the Miskito were pounding their bark cloth upon stones around 1671.

[34] It is not uncommon that the plant, which furnishes the material, gives also the name of the tool.

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
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wore tight cotton bands below the knees and above the ankles. Today 301
woven bands of glass beads are worn around the neck, wrists, and ankles.
Straw hats are decorated with feathers and jaguar teeth (*Mosquito, Paya*).

Black paint is smeared over the body by the men (*Sumo, Mosquito,* 302
Paya) as a decoration and for protection from insects. Geometrical de- [751]
signs are drawn in red paint, mainly by the women. The *Sumo, Mosquito,* [531]
and *Paya* tattooed geometrical designs upon the face, arms, and breast. 304
The *Sumo* men made ornamental scars on their faces and chipped their teeth. All *Sumo* tribes except the *Bawihka* practiced head deformation. During infancy a folding flap of wood at the top of the cradle was tied firmly to the crown of the head.

TRANSPORTATION

Loads are carried with a band passing over the head (women) or 482
across the chest (men). Children are carried on the back in a blanket, [855]
the points of which are tied in front. [487]

The country has hunting trails but no roads. Most travel is done 501
in dugout canoes propelled with poles and broad-bladed paddles. Rafts are used for down-river traffic. Large keeled canoes, often equipped with a sail, are used at sea.

MANUFACTURES

Basketry.—Crude baskets, mainly of wickerwork, are made chiefly for 285
storage bins. Bark and silk grass fiber bags are very common. Bark fiber is used also to make tumplines, hammocks, and such.

Bark cloth.—Bark cloth is beaten out of ficus-tree bark with a grooved 287
wooden mallet.

Weaving.—Cotton is spun on a spindle, which has a whorl and is 286
rotated in a gourd. Coarse-textured but soft cotton cloth is woven on a two-beam loom. Thread was formerly dyed and designs were woven in the cloth. Sometimes feathers, particularly a fringe of white Muscovy duck down, were incorporated into the fabric.

Ceramics.—Pottery making has been described only from the *Sumo* 323
and *Paya*, although pottery was formerly made by all tribes. Women model small vessels out of a lump of clay but build up large ones with coils. They polish them with a pebble, dry them for several days, and fire them in the open. Pottery types include jars about 4 feet (1.3 m.) high, various types of jugs, water jars, small bowls, griddles, and tobacco pipes. All vessels have a convex base.

Miscellaneous manufactures.—Metates are still used by the *Paya* 445
and *Sumo*, and they have recently been adopted by the *Jicaque*, but the *Mosquito* are said no longer to use them. Metates are flat-topped boulders, which only rarely have a trimmed surface. Manos are round pebbles.